

Larnach said the Government were considering the putting of a sum of money on the estimates; and as regarded the second question, it would involve a large expenditure, but the Government would consider the matter during the recess.

M. De Giers, Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs, has been granted two months' leave of absence, and will pay a visit to Bohemia.

An outbreak of cholera has occurred at Marseilles of a serious character. Upwards of 20 cases are reported as ending fatally daily.

THURSDAY.

In the House of Representatives yesterday Mr. W. F. Buckland resumed the debate on the East and West Coast railway proposals. The motion for the appointment of a committee was put, and lost on a division by 34 to 27. Twenty-six members paired—making forty-seven against and forty in favour of the motion.

The Afghans have moved considerable reinforcements to the Zulfikar Pass. Russian forces continue to arrive at Penj-deh. The Marquis of Salisbury made a statement in the House of Lords on Tuesday night on the Russo-Afghan frontier situation. Lord Salisbury informed the House that the question of the occupancy of the Zulfikar Pass was still unchanged, Russia dissenting from the contention put forward by the British Foreign Office on the subject. His Lordship added that it was not the intention of her Majesty's Government to modify the existing agreement with the Ameer so as to provide for the occupancy of a position in Afghanistan, but that at the same time the fortification of the Indian frontier would be vigorously proceeded with regardless of other Powers.

INVERCARGILL.

(From an Occasional Correspondent.)

THE weather we are experiencing here for some time back is excellent, more especially for this period of the year. During the nights we have slight but occasional frosts, and nothing intercepts our view of the sun throughout the day. I have received information from several of our local pioneer gentlemen to the effect, that a more favourable winter to their knowledge (with the exception of one) has not been witnessed in Southland. Should the weather still continue we shall have an exceptionally early spring. There is every indication to believe that from the numerous and healthy buds appearing on the different fruit trees, there will be abundance of fruit this year. Early potatoes were planted fully a month ago, by several parties throughout the district, together with several culinary vegetables. The cockatoos, whom it is always so hard to please, are taking advantage of the fine weather in turning up the soil to be pulverised by the frosts. They are concocting new schemes in increasing the value of their properties by further breaking-up, in view of the long and continual goodness of the weather.

I always feel gratified at being able to write favourably of any person, place, or thing; but it sometimes becomes absolutely necessary to write the plain, unbiassed, and unvarnished truth, which although very unpalatable to those whom it concerns, is equally as necessary as chastisement is to an ungovernable child.

Some six months back Mr. J. J. Connor, of Dunedin, visited this town, with the view of establishing a branch of the Irish National League, for the purpose of having our Irishmen here to co-operate with their colonial fellow-countrymen in raising a fund sufficient to pay one Irish member in the British House of Commons. The first meeting being a preliminary one, was attended by Mr. Connor, who delivered a short address on matters concerning the object of the meeting to about half a dozen of what I would term good patriotic Irishmen. At this meeting it was unanimously resolved to convene a general meeting for further consideration, which was accordingly done; and, I regret to say, scarcely a dozen gentlemen put in an appearance. Nothing definite was arrived at, further than that the Secretary was requested to prepare and forward subscription lists to several gentlemen throughout Invercargill and the country districts,—the lists to be returned in three months from date of issue. To make this matter short, only two lists were returned: one from Woodlands, and the other from a lady resident near this town, to whom is due much credit for her indefatigable efforts produced in raising funds for such an important and laudable object. In conclusion, I am informed on good authority that the ladies of the town are intended to organise a branch, and have no doubt from the subscribers' names of this district appearing in one of your recent issues, the majority of which were those of ladies, but they will make it a brilliant success.

At a meeting of the Catholic Literary Society held on Tuesday evening, July 21—the president, Mr. P. Reid, in the chair—one candidate was balloted for and duly initiated, and one was proposed for membership. After the usual routine business was transacted, the election of officers for the ensuing term of six months was proceeded with, and resulted in favour of the following gentlemen:—President, Mr. T. McGrath; vice-president, Mr. P. Reid; secretary, Mr. F. Buckley; treasurer, Mr. J. Cusack; librarian, Mr. M. O'Brien; Messrs. T. Crowley, D. R. Lawlor and J. Reid, together with the officers, were appointed the standing committee; Messrs. P. Reid and E. Cameron were elected auditors; Rev. Father McRae and Mr. O'Brien were re-elected trustees. A hearty vote of thanks was accorded to the retiring officers on the motion of Mr. D. Bradley. The first of the programmes—entitled "Is Tobacco-smoking Beneficial or Deleterious?"—as arranged by the standing committee, is to be debated to-morrow evening, Messrs. J. Cusack and M. O'Brien being selected "openers" for the affirmative and negative respectively.

The local branch of the H.A.C.B. Society hold their meetings the first Monday in each month, which are fairly attended. In commenting on this society from a financial point of view it may be said to compare favourably with any similar society in New Zealand. But I regret to say the same cannot be said of it numerically, which is principally due, I believe, to the high charges for initiation. It is to be hoped that the District Board will see to this matter, and also that the contributions for junior will not be so high as for senior members.

Another Christy minstrel entertainment, in aid of the Convent Building Fund, is to be given by the members of our local Amateur Dramatic Club on the 21st inst. I have not the slightest hesitation in saying, from the appearance of the elaborately prepared programme, but that the high anticipations of the performers' efforts will be fully realised. As for the *dramatis personae*, it is unnecessary to make any special mention, their abilities as performers on the stage being already well known to an Invercargill audience.

The Southland Irish Rifle corps assemble in the Garrison Hall every Saturday evening, and are put through several squad movements by Staff-sergeant Blackmore and Color-sergeant Coleman; and it may be stated that in view of the short time since the corps started the members are exceedingly quick in learning their drill. The commissioned officers of the company are, Mr. W. G. Fore, captain; Mr. G. M. Starkey, first lieutenant; Mr. D. B. Lawlor, sub-lieutenant. These gentlemen are proving themselves to be highly interested in the progress of the corps from the number of recruits they get sworn in every drill night. The number on the roll is sixty-six.

A collection was made on the two previous Sundays to meet the interest on the debt on the Convent. The amount required was fully realised. In view of the debt being so great, and the interest so high, it is to be hoped some means will be devised for its further liquidation. Another bazaar would wipe off the whole amount, and, I am happy to say, through information received from several ladies, that one is to be held next Easter, or thereabout.

There are several other important matters which I shall chronicle in my next.

Commercial.

MR. DONALD STRONACH (on behalf of the New Zealand Loan and Mercantile Agency Company, Limited), reports for the week ending July 29, as follows:—

Fat Cattle.—A small supply, viz., 13 head, was yarded at Burnside to-day for the week's requirements, most of which were good to prime quality. In consequence of the small supply forward last week, prices showed a considerable improvement on last week's rates. Best bullocks brought £9 to £12 5s; others, £5 2s 6d to £8 10s; cows in proportion. We sold—on account of Mr. James Guild, Otaio, 12 bullocks at £11 2s 6d to £11 12s 6d; Mr. J. M. Greenaway, Rangitara, 6 bullocks at £10 7s 6d to £11 7s 6d; Mr. William Ackroyd, Temuka, £8 10s to £9 7s 6d; and quote prime beef 22s 6d to 25s, ordinary 20s to 22s 6d per 100lb.

Fat Calves.—Ten were penned, and sold readily at from 19s to 42s each.

Fat Sheep.—1,632 were penned, of which 720 were merinos, balance cross-bred (only a few of which were prime). Competition was active, and prices for prime mutton advanced 2s to 2s 6d per head, whilst ordinary remained much about the same as last week. We sold, on account of the New Zealand Agricultural Company (Gore), 79 cross-bred wethers at 15s 9d, 62 cross-bred wethers at 13s, and 53 merino wethers at 13s 6d; on account Glenledi Estate Company, Milton, 64 cross-bred ewes at 14s; Mr. J. S. Browne, Palmerston, 69 merino wethers at 7s 8d to 8s 3d; proprietors Seadown Estate, 191 merino wethers at 9s 3d; and quote prime mutton 3d per lb; ordinary, 21 to 2½ per lb.

Fat Pigs.—142 were forward; the market was very dull, and prices receded considerably on last week's. Prices realised from 7s 6d to 42s each.

Store Cattle and Sheep.—We have no transactions to report.

Sheepskins.—At our usual weekly sale on Monday, we offered a good catalogue. Country dry cross-breeds, low to medium, brought 101 to 2s 11d; do. do. merino, 1s 1d to 3s 10d; dry pelts, 1d to 8d; butchers' green cross-breeds, 3s 2d, 3s 4d, 3s 6d, 3s 8d, 3s 9d; do. do. merino, 2s 10s, 3s 2d, 3s 4d, 3s 6d.

Hides.—A good demand exists for these, all coming to hand being freely taken up at late rates.

Tallow.—There is but small demand, and if anything the market is easier. We quote inferior and mixed, 16s to 18s; medium, 19s to 21s; good to prime, 22s to 23s; and rough fat, 11s to 14s per cwt.

Grain.—Wheat: Business is steady at last quotations—say prime velvet and Tuscan, 3s 2d to 3s 3d; medium 2s 9d to 3s 1d; inferior, 2s 4d to 2s 8d; fowls' wheat, 2s to 2s 3d (ex store).—Oats are in moderate request, but as buyers decline to accede to sellers' demands, viz., 2s for stout milling, 1s 9d to 1s 11d for bright feed, there is but little business done; discoloured and medium feed is moving off at 1s 7d to 1s 9d; musty and inferior at 1s to 1s 5d—Barley is in but small demand, and no change in prices to report.

MR. F. MEENAN, King street, reports:—Wholesale prices, including bags: Oats, 1s 6d to 1s 10d; wheat, milling 3s to 3s 1½, fowls' feed 1s 6d to 2s 6d; barley, malting 3s to 3s 3d; milling 2s 0d to 2s 6d, feeding 2s; oaten hay, £3; rye-grass, £3; chaff, £2 10s to £3; straw, £1 15s to £2; bran, £3 10s to £3 15s; pollard, £4 10s; flour, £7 10s to £8; oatmeal, £8 10s; fresh butter medium to prime, 1s to 1s 4d; eggs, 1s 3d; good salt butter, scarce, 9d; cheese, 41 to 5d; bacon, 7d in rolls, hams 10d; potatoes, Derwents £3 to £3 5s, kidneys £2 5s.

The following amusing little anecdote is told by the N. C. D. News:—When the Russian ironclad Minin was a Nagasaki lately, H. M. S. Audacious was there also, and when the Minin went to sea, the Audacious followed. Steam fast, half speed, or slow, the British ship followed the Russian until the latter cast anchor to see what his friend who was so very attentive would do next. Almost at once the Audacious dropped her anchor about half a mile, just about the distance she had preserved at sea, astern of the Minin. While the captain and officers of the latter were waiting for the next move, the Englishman ran up a signal to the Russian, "Come on board to dinner." But he did not.